



POLICY: FORMING THE FAMILY IN THE FAITH: PARENTAL LEAVE
EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 22, 2024

VALUES

- + **We value God's gift of Life. We promote the dignity and sanctity of life.** We support our married employees in welcoming/nurturing life and fulfilling the essential procreative dimension of their married love to accept their God-given role to become parents. This includes providing time for husband and wife to cultivate a loving and secure relationships with their child in the first few weeks after birth or adoption.

- + **We value the unique importance of the family, and the role parents play in forming families.** *“The apostolate of ... families is of unique importance for the Church and civil society... This mission —to be the first and vital cell of society — the family has received from God. It will fulfill this mission if it appears as the domestic sanctuary of the Church by reason of the mutual affection of its members and the prayer that they offer to God in common...” (Apostolicam Actuositatem, § 11).*

- + **We value fortifying the Domestic Church:** We value the family taking the opportunity to form and grow in their faith and nurture the domestic church. Providing parental leave for our married employees provides dedicated time for this spiritual formation.

Purpose & Policy

The birth or adoption of a child is an exciting time for expecting parents and for their families whether they are giving birth to a child or receiving a child through adoption. The birth or adoption of a child is an opportunity for the family to form how they will grow in faith and nurture the domestic church. The Diocese of St. Petersburg supports its married employees to fully embrace their God-given role as husband and wife to become parents. The Diocese provides eligible married employees up to eight (8) weeks paid parental leave (separate from paid vacation, sick or short-term disability leave). The purpose of the leave is to allow the mother to recover and for both parents to bond with their newborn or newly adopted child, to form or re-invigorate the spiritual foundation of the family, and to achieve a balance between their employment and their new family obligations. Paid parental leave will allow for the family to have time to spiritually bond without financial hardship or the stress of pastoral ministry commitments.

Eligibility Requirements for Parental Leave

- Be employed by any qualifying Catholic entity under the leadership of the Diocese of St. Petersburg (parish, school or diocesan entity) in a full or part-time position (pension-eligible – at least 1,000 hours worked per year) for at least three (3) full months [90 calendar days] of service prior to the birth or adoption of their new child;
- Parental leave eligibility begins after 90 calendar days of continuous employment.
- The Employee must be expecting to give birth to or adopt a child.

- Experience a birth or adoption event occurring on or after January 1, 2024 (or 90 days prior to the adoption of this policy, whichever comes first).
- Intend to return to work following the leave.
- Foster Parents are only eligible for parental leave once they are in the process of adopting the child.

Paid Parental Leave Benefit

- The maximum amount of paid parental leave available to any eligible employee is eight (8) paid weeks. Under the Family Medical Leave policy, eligible employees are entitled to 4 more weeks of unpaid leave, in which vacation, sick or short-term disability pay may be allocated.
- A week of paid parental leave equates to the employee's normally scheduled work week.
- Employees granted parental leave will receive full pay corresponding to the employee's normally scheduled work week, up to eight weeks, commencing at the birth or legal placement of the child. Employees on parental leave will not be required to use their accrued sick or vacation during the parental leave.
- Parental leave will run concurrently with the location's paid holiday, summer, Christmas, and Easter/Spring break schedules and with Family Medical leave where it applies. Under no circumstance will paid leave be extended or stacked due to such scheduled holiday/break time.
- If a holiday occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, such day will be charged to holiday pay; however, such holiday pay will not extend the total paid parental leave entitlement.
- If the employee is on paid parental leave when the diocese offers administrative leave (i.e., staff retreats, professional development days, etc.) that time will be recorded as paid parental leave. Administrative leave will not extend the paid parental leave entitlement.
- Paid parental leave is only for reasons of paternity and not any other leave allowed under the Family Medical Leave Act. If the family medical leave is not related to birth or adoption of a child then each parent is entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid leave.
- Even if an entity is exempt from the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), this policy is to be followed as written.

Family and Medical Leave in Conjunction with Parental Leave

If the employee is eligible for Family and Medical Leave (job protected leave), parental leave is to be taken concurrently. Please refer to the Family and Medical Leave Policy for further guidance on the Family and Medical Leave.

Coordination with Other Policies

- Paid parental leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with leave under the Family and Medical Leave benefit; thus, any leave taken under this policy will be counted toward the 12 weeks of available Family and Medical Leave per a 12-month period. All other requirements and provisions under the Family and Medical Leave will apply. In no case will the total amount of leave— whether paid or unpaid— granted to the employee under the Family and Medical Leave

exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month Family and Medical Leave period. Please refer to the Family and Medical Leave Policy for further guidance on the Family and Medical Leave.

- After the paid parental leave is exhausted, the balance of Family and Medical Leave (if applicable) will be compensated through employee's accrued sick, vacation and personal time. Upon exhaustion of accrued sick, vacation, and personal time, any remaining leave will be unpaid leave. Please refer to the Family and Medical Leave Policy for further guidance on the Family and Medical Leave.
- The Diocese will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid parental leave period just as if they were on Family and Medical-qualifying leave or taking any other paid leave such as paid vacation leave or paid sick leave. Employees will need to contribute their share of insurance and other benefits during their leave. Upon exhaustion of parental leave, accrued sick, vacation and personal time, any remaining medical premiums are the responsibility of the employee.
- An employee who takes paid parental leave that does not have remaining Family and Medical Leave will be afforded the same level of job protection for the period of time that the employee is on paid parental leave as if the employee were on Family and Medical Leave-qualifying leave.
- Employees must take parental leave in one continuous period of leave and must use all paid parental leave at the required time frame indicated above. Any unused parental leave will be forfeited at the end of the initial eight (8) weeks, unless agreed upon in writing to their employer. Such an agreement will need to be forward to the Diocese of St. Petersburg Human Resources Office.
- Upon termination of the individual's employment at the diocesan entity, he or she will not be paid for any unused paid parental leave for which he or she was eligible.
- If the employee does not return to work for at least 60 workdays after the conclusion of the leave or resigns during that period, the employee must repay all the compensation received during that period of paid parental leave.
- If a father and mother are both employed by the same diocesan entity (same parish, school or diocesan institution), they are both eligible for parental leave up to a combined total of 12 weeks. However, if they both wish to take such leave, only a total of twelve (12) weeks paid leave will be provided to be split between them, no more than eight (8) weeks for a single employee.
- Parental Leave is subject to the rules and coordination of our pension plan.
- All employees taking parental leave will be subject to the "break in service" conditions of our pension and health benefit.
- All employees taking parental leave will be subject to the "break-in-service" conditions of our diocesan pension and benefit plans. When applying for parental leave, the employee will contact the Diocese of St. Petersburg's Pension office for more information of the break-in-service/vesting requirements and conditions.
- This Policy is adopted in accordance with the Diocese of St. Petersburg's right to exercise of religious freedoms under the Constitution in defining marriage as between a man and a woman as a matter of Faith. In respecting all life, the Policy is to support, nurture and grow a family in Faith by permitting paid time off for the purposes stated.

Requests for Paid Parental Leave

- Paid parental leave will be administered by the local benefits administrator at the entity (parish, school, or diocesan entity), which is typically the Business Manager, Principal, or Bookkeeper. As with Family and Medical Leave, prior notice of at 30 days is requested. Approvals are made by the parish, school, or diocesan entity in consultation with the Human Resources Ministry at the Diocese.
- Employees, in collaboration with their supervisor, should plan for the transfer of responsibilities to other staff or replacement staff in advance of parental leave.

Policy Status: Mandated by Bishop throughout the Diocese Effective: January 22, 2024

Approved by:  Last Reviewed: January 12, 2024